

CEPPS/IRI Quarterly Report: January - March 2005
Georgia: Youth Today!
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. 114-A-00-02-00079-00
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I. SUMMARY

The International Republican Institute (IRI) began working in Georgia in 1997. IRI's programs have been designed to help Georgians strengthen democracy through increasing their participation in the political process. IRI's programs have concentrated on two areas: (1) political party development at both the national and regional levels, and (2) bringing Georgian youth into the political process. IRI has continued to promote and strengthen its programs in Georgia since it received the CEPPS II award in April 2002.

During this quarter, IRI continued to work with political parties on their restructuring efforts. Many party leaders joined the Saakashvili administration after the January 2004 presidential election. Political party plurality in Georgia is challenged due to the change in political climate after the revolution and the void of leadership and inexperience in the parties. IRI is working with the political parties to assist them in reversing this trend so that the political party life will again become competitive. IRI continued its work with regional women's groups, advising them on how to become more politically active, both in political parties and independently. In addition, IRI continued its work and support of the national youth NGO New Generation New Initiative (NGNI), assisting and advising the organization in the development of its national network of youth activists.

II. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

IRI's programs primarily concentrate on two areas:

- 1) political party development at both the national and regional levels, and
- 2) bringing Georgian youth into the political process.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Political Party Restructuring Consultations

During this quarter, IRI conducted more than 40 consultations with the New Conservative Party/Industrialists, Labor Party, United National Movement, The Conservatives Party, Traditionalists, and National Democratic Party to assist them in the development of a new party structure and enhance their coalition building efforts. These consultations were conducted with the goal of strengthening these groups' party bases as well as defining the role of the parties' regional offices.

IRI has been working with the political parties on restructuring their organizations since the

January 2004 presidential election. These consultations are necessary because after the Rose Revolution the new government party, United National Movement, lost up to two-thirds of their party members because they moved into government positions. Similarly, opposition parties lost many of their operatives because they no longer felt optimistic that their parties would gain power. Opposition parties also lost private funding due to the fact that elections are not until 2006. The parties needed to learn to work with smaller, more mobilized structures.

An example of this program's success was the February 24-27, 2005 party conference for United National Movement that IRI organized. This conference brought together 85 regional chairmen to discuss the future of the party, its structural plan, and platform ideas. During this conference, the party leadership fired 20 regional chairmen who were not performing to a high enough standard. Because of this national conference, the leaders of the party are now going to the regions to conduct conferences at the local level, develop the party plan within the local party organizations, and further discuss platform issues.

Additionally, IRI Georgia assisted the Traditionalists in developing a political movement whose goal was to bring individuals who are not interested in joining a political party into the political discussion. The initial conference was held on March 28, 2005, and brought together professors, editors, and other civil society leaders. Over 400 people participated in the conference.

Campaign Academy

IRI conducted two ten-day campaign academies from January 8-18, 2005, and from February 24-March 5, 2005. This was part of an ongoing program that has benefited political activists for four years. Participants of the January and February campaign academies consisted of 20 party activists from the United National Movement, New Conservative Party, the Labor Party the National Democratic Party, and the Conservatives Party.

This program is designed to create a core group of campaign specialists who are encouraged to think strategically and be proactive when conducting political campaigns. Often in Georgia, campaigns are based on the leading personalities of the parties rather than on ideology. IRI is training the activists to develop positive, issue-based messages for their parties and candidates that resonate with the voters. The campaign academies are comprehensive, thorough programs in which participants are instructed in the fundamentals of campaign and political party organization, message development, political polling, media training and other methods of campaign management. In addition to IRI staff trainers, IRI enlists the support of volunteer trainers from Internews, Rustavi-2 television station, representatives from the parliamentary legal department and the Central Election Commission, and a local polling firm.

Party Building and Party Management Seminars

This quarter, IRI Georgia conducted over 14 two-day party building seminars for United National Movement, New Conservatives, National Democratic Party, Labor Party, and New Conservatives Party. Seminars were conducted in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Poti, Telavi and Borjomi.

Over 600 party local activists from Tbilisi, Imereti, Kakheti, Samtskhet Javakheti, Samegrelo, Adjara, and Guria regional organizations were trained on the issues of the local party building, local party management, role of the local leader and local party plan writing. Each seminar included practical exercises that allowed local party activists to write party plans for their own regions.

The trainings were conducted by IRI Georgia Program Officer Dmitri Shashkin and the party's legal department officers. The seminars were conducted with individual parties because the above-mentioned discussion topics were party-specific depending on how their regional plan was created and implemented.

IRI also assisted the Conservative Party in organizing the first fundraising event in Georgian history in which tickets were sold to support a party. The event took place on January 27, 2005, at a music club. Musicians, poets, and a children's choir were the featured events. The party raised approximately \$3,000.

Additionally, IRI worked with the United National Movement Isani / Samgori regional organization in developing a voter outreach program. This voter outreach program focused on a door-to-door campaign that focused on explaining to voters what United National Movement had accomplished in a one-year period. This is essential as many voters are unclear what the ruling party has accomplished and this in turn has led to a drop in the popularity of the party.

Media Communications Training

This quarter, IRI Georgia conducted two five-day media training seminars on January 2-6, 2005, and February 2-6, 2005, for activists of the United National Movement, National Democratic Party, Labor Party, New Conservatives, and Conservatives Party. The goal of these seminars was to help the leaders of the local self-government and the party leaders to improve assist in improving their relations with the free media.

IRI has been conducting these seminars as an integral part of the party development process. Many of the spokespersons that use to work with the various political parties have gone to work in the new government. This has left the parties without experienced press coordinators. IRI has worked with them to teach them how to write an effective press release, how make the party leadership look good on camera, and how to work effectively with journalists.

Youth Party Building Seminars

This quarter, IRI Georgia conducted six Youth Party Building seminars for United National Movement and New Conservatives in Tbilisi and Telavi. Over 250 youth activists from Tbilisi and Kakheti youth regional organizations attended these seminars. The goal of the seminars was to help parties' youth organizations find their role in the political life of Georgia and make their efforts more effective for involving of the Georgian youth in political processes.

These seminars are necessary because youth party organizations have unclear agendas between elections. Their role during the campaign is clear, but the organizations are not used when there are no elections. IRI's goal with the youth party building seminars is to help them develop an action plan on the national and local level for the next six months and then assist the organizations in implementing that plan. During the two-day seminars, youth participants were trained on the issues of the role of the party youth organization, youth party building and youth party management. Participants were also taught how to work in teams and how to properly conduct youth outreach programs. The IRI Georgia program officer showed participants possible action plans and the groups, with the trainer's assistance, developed concrete and specific plans for their regions plan of activities.

New Generation New Initiative (NGNI) and Youth NGO Development

IRI staff conducted roughly 18 consultations with its main youth NGO partner, New Generation New Initiative (NGNI). IRI assisted them in working with their regional offices in Akhaltsikhe, Telavi, Poti and Gori with trainings on how to effectively manage and run a regional office and best tactics for continued development. The consultations also included working directly with the leadership of NGNI to advise them of best practices of organizing seminars and strategic planning for election observation mission in CIS countries. IRI continued to work with NGNI in the development of their national network.

NGNI conducted the following meetings, seminars and trainings in Georgia for this quarter:

1. NGNI meeting with Mr. Robert Simmons, special representative of NATO Secretary General in Caucasus and Central Asia on February 2, 2005.
2. Voter education seminar entitled "Knowing Your Rights: Voting in Georgia." This took place in Gurjaani, Kakheti on February 4, 2005.
3. NGNI monitors parliamentary elections in Tajikistan on February 27, 2005.
4. On Feb 28, 2005 NGNI held a press conference about changes in the electoral code of Georgia and changes that they recommended to the Government of Georgia to amend the election code.
5. NGNI conducted a training course on February 28, 2005 about details and specific law concerning elections in Moldova. In addition, NGNI deployed 13 monitors to Moldova to monitor the parliamentary elections of March 6, 2005.
6. During this quarter, NGNI conducted 16 consultations in the regions and in Tbilisi with local partner youth organizations, and NGOs.

The IRI Georgia Country Director participated directly in some of the above mentioned activities and met with visiting members of a US delegation that met with NGNI to brainstorm on ways to improve Euro-Atlantic process education activities in Georgia.

Significantly, IRI expanded its cooperation with the youth group Sunny House during this quarter. Over the last three months Sunny House has trained over 85 youth in Kutaisi, Rustavi, Batumi on developing leadership and team building skills.

The target group for the participants of the leadership trainings were young people aged 18-25, who are either students or other active members of Georgian society. The participants were representatives of the regions of Kutaisi, Rustavi, Batumi. IRI staff also participated directly in the trainings and lent assistance when requested.

The main theme of the regional leadership trainings were the lessons that Sunny House learned in modern leadership training from a youth conference in Budapest, Hungary, in 2004. Methodology in project implementation over the last quarter calls for leadership and team building activities that focused on social inclusion of youth, methods of active participation and developing leadership and management skills that may be unique to the varied cultures of the regions of Kutaisi, Rustavi, and Batumi. Other sub-themes included, but not be limited to: team building and collaboration, citizenship rights and responsibilities, as well as elements of small-scale project management, etc.

In addition to NGNI and Sunny House, IRI is also working closely with another local youth group, Kmara, on the development of an internship program that will allow young professionals from Georgia to work as interns in Lithuanian government ministries and NGOs. The internship program is expected to begin around July 2005. IRI's role will be to assist in identifying partners and host institutions in Georgia and Lithuania as well as select the interns that will participate. The internships are expected to last approximately three months.

In recent working meetings between IRI Georgia and Kmara that have taken place during this quarter in Tbilisi and Vilnius, it has been determined that five Georgian young people will be offered an opportunity to intern within different branches of the Lithuanian government and/or prominent NGOs, as well as take part in a few relevant courses at local institutions of higher education such as at the prestigious Vilnius University where IRI Georgia has numerous contacts.

The students selected for this program will be able enrich their knowledge and broaden their horizons on many aspects of democratic transition in a similar country where democratic reforms have been carried out more successfully if not dramatically different circumstances. In the course of the project, several roundtable discussions will be organized in a variety of government agencies and NGOs. There will be at least three roundtable discussions with other researchers, intellectuals and government leaders.

Women's Work

During this quarter, IRI conducted more than five consultations with local representatives from the women's NGO *Tamarioni* in Poti and Kutaisi that dealt with strengthening the capacity of this women's NGO's regional office in Guria and Adjara and Imereti. These consultations dealt with how to effectively run a regional office, best communication practices with the head office, and how to recruit new members. The consultations also began to direct the women's focus on participation in the upcoming 2006 local elections.

Over 200 women were trained by IRI in three leadership trainings which were done in this quarter. These trainings were conducted in Bojormi, Kutaisi, and Poti. Women from Labor, New Rights, United National Movement, and Conservatives parties participated as well as those from the NGO *Tamarioni*.

After IRI's trainings, many women decided to participate in upcoming local self-government elections not only as voters, but also as candidates. Similar trainings will continue in April and May in Telavi.

Training Videos

This quarter, IRI produced two training videos that focused on message communication and working with free media. These videos are produced and distributed to the political parties and are used by IRI as an aid during its campaign seminars.

IV. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This is IRI's last full quarterly report under its current USAID Cooperative Agreement. Due to the changed political landscape in Georgia, IRI has adjusted some of its programs to better reflect these changes. New indicators will be devised under the extended cooperative agreement to reflect IRI's new programming goals.

Result 1 National and Regional political party organizations will increase the level of intra-party communication and increase the importance of party platforms.

Indicators: *A. Major political parties will create regional and national party plans based on voter needs and concerns.*

IRI worked with the United National Movement Isani / Samgori regional organization in developing a voter outreach program. This outreach program has put the party in touch with the voter to hear their needs and concerns and this, in turn, will help to shape the direction the party moves. This is essential as many voters are unclear what the ruling party has accomplished and this, in turn, has led to a drop in the popularity of the party.

B. Major political parties will conduct internal party training programs to strengthen the party ideology.

As a result of IRI's consultations, the New Conservatives' legal department began going to the regions to conduct seminars for regional party legal departments. Topics discussed pertained to possible amendments to the election code.

Leaders of The New Conservatives party visited regional organizations to present the draft law on the local self-government elections that the party drafted. The presentations are an effort to rally support behind the proposed law.

The 18 members of parliament that represent The New Conservatives divided the country into 18 sections, which then allowed each member to visit, on a weekly basis, a specific region and discuss with local party leaders what is currently happening in parliament to the local party leaders.

C. Major political parties will create strong regional departments within the party to increase communication between national and regional offices.

United National Movement began conducting party conferences throughout the country. The goal of the conferences is to elect regional party chairmen, develop a party plan within the local party organizations, and further discuss platform issues.

The newly-established Conservatives Party continued the process of opening regional party organizations. During this quarter, the party was able to establish over 35 regional organizations and conduct primary elections within the party in order to elect the local party chairmen.

D. Political parties use issue-based survey data to formulate platform messages that will resonate with the electorate.

No results to report

Result 2 To deepen the participation of young women and men in politically active civic organizations, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Indicator: *New Generation-New Initiative will conduct political educational programs geared towards developing a grassroots network of youth activists throughout the country.*

NGNI worked with its new regional offices Akhaltsikhe, Telavi, Poti and Gori, focusing communications with the national headquarters, how to run an effective regional office, and outreach at the local level to increase the organizations network.

During their election observation mission to Moldova, NGNI, with IRI's guidance, also established important contact with the National Council of

Youth Organizations of Moldova. An agreement was reached to send members of this organization to Georgia to assist NGNI in regional outreach and grassroots youth techniques that the Moldovan youth learned from their cooperation with European Union partner organizations.

Sunny House targeted socially and politically active youth ages 18-25 in Kutaisi, Rustavi, and Batumi to assist them in developing the skills necessary to become leaders in their respective regions.

Kmara Georgia sent a regional youth volunteer to Vilnius, Lithuania, to participate in a youth forum and discuss regional development issues in Georgia and engage Lithuanian youth on joint assistance possibilities with Georgian youth that will benefit the regions of Georgia as a whole.

Result 3 To encourage the spread of ideas within the political parties, the role of youth and women will be developed and increased within the political party structure.

Indicator: *Parties plan outreach strategies to various constituencies, especially youth and women, and concentrate on creating youth party auxiliaries.*

IRI worked with the newly-established youth organization within United National Movement. IRI assisted them in developing the structure of the organization and the party strategy.

Result 4 To encourage the spread of practical and proven ideas on youth organizational development and youth election observation network development on the part of Georgian youth organizations with youth branches of political parties and other youth organizations in the CIS region.

Indicator: *Georgian youth organizations, led by NGNI, will participate in outreach strategies with various counterpart organizations in Ukraine and Belarus to strengthen youth organizations and youth branches of political parties and also strengthen youth observation networks for national elections.*

NGNI sent 13 youth observers to Moldova to monitor the March 6, 2005, parliamentary elections. Excellent Georgian media coverage was received by NGNI for this undertaking. There were approximately 150 foreign observers in Moldova and, therefore, NGNI represented about 10% of the total foreign observers – a fact which was often recited in the local media in Moldova and also by the international and diplomatic community in Chisinau. In addition to election monitoring, NGNI bolstered its contacts with local Moldovan youth organizations and agreed to host some Moldovan youth in Georgia for assistance with regional trainings.

NGNI also sent an observer to monitor parliamentary elections in Tajikistan for the February 27, 2005, elections. This monitor worked under the OSCE election monitoring umbrella and was able to establish valuable contacts with OSCE and other international organizations in Dushanbe.